

Insidious Madness of Hariti & Other Seductive Considerations

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SYNOPSIS

Suddenly, brand new literature, art, and architecture resurrected a Buddha from a trackless sixth-century BCE, to walk the earth and traverse the skies in an era fermented by the Risen Christ. A deductive will latch onto the puzzle of bilingualism, and the Aramaic derived neo script bringing literacy to the pristine South Asian Arcadia presided by various Greco-Buddhist goddesses. Among them, the over the top Hariti relentlessly offers the cornucopia that once nurtured infant Zeus. Hariti in folklore is the “One who Steals” – The ogress decimated innocent children and spread smallpox plague. When Buddha contrived to hide under his drinking bowl one of Hariti’s prized child the distraught Yakshi of Rajagriha had a change of heart and transformed into a benevolent mother goddess and giver of offspring. The folklore remedy is just one explanation to varied sacrifices meant to avert the dead-end of fated humanity. Lifelike effigies and shadowy postmortem healing involve the goddess of bliss and her live step-ins; relinquishing joy in life is a build-up to endless bliss rolled-out by cyclic rebirths of Buddha described in Jatakam parables and theatrical vignettes. The key to brain and heart coherence is achieved by symbolic communication. Commemorative ex-votos unwind miles of sculptured frieze meant to build a ladder to heaven. None is immune to the seductive charm of Hariti dominating countless graveyards. In the shortlived Mahayana madness, Hariti received adulation mingled with abject fear. The mastaba type mausoleums and reliquary stupas mushrooming on a global scale offer a prolific view of esoteric rituals performed inside the centrally planned service quarters generally called monasteries.

The notion that “We are still living even when we are dead” offers a place for bold experimentation and critical thinking of mortuary monuments in the Mahayana Buddhist novel necropolises. With the first centuries monumental commissions, the artists, chiefly jeweler-sculptors and ivory carvers, focus on the imagination’s role in accounting for the past, which according to the current reckoning goes back to the imaginary genesis of the Buddha in about 563 BCE. In the deep-down recollection, the goddess dominates the Buddha. The rich details and refined Greco-Roman style classify the enthroned mother goddess from Yusufzai as an imperial ex-voto reverently transported to Gandhara (0.1). Her crown of wreath very similar to the one adorning Augustus Caesar confirms its derivation and early date (01a). A rosette with six heart-shaped petals accentuate her upswept coiffure, and the curious curls at the center parting too is part of the peerless symbolic communication in early Buddhist sculpture (0.1b). Her mantle is draped over a long-sleeved tunic closed at the neck by an ornate neckband. From the shoulder to the gold cuff bracelet a row of paired pearls clips the stylish ruche fabric of the sleeve. Carvings from Palmyra often parade such fancy sewing. An infant cradled on her lap

clutches the unique tripartite-pearl necklace looped between her breasts. The Chinese are particularly adept at stringing pearls in multiple ways. Her matching clustered pearl drop-earring is intended to look like Hellenistic okra-shaped gold earrings (o.1c). A flower picked out in gold granulation alternates with the cabochon gem set on her thick rounded bracelet. The jeweler-sculptor has carefully rendered the equally ornamental anklets embossed with a flower between cross-hatched leaf pattern.



o.1 Mother goddess, Schist, 77 X 42 cm, Ø 14 cm, Yusufzai, Pakistan, Circa 1st century CE
London: British Museum (1886,0611.1)

o.1a Wreath of Victory: Augustus Caesar (63 BCE–14 CE)

o.1b Hariti hairstyle detail, Schist, Yusufzai, 1st-2nd century CE, London: British Museum

o.1c Exemplary hairstyle of Hariti, detail, Schist, Gandhara, 1st-2nd century CE

In appearance, the mother goddess from Yusufzai is Isis Lactans prototypical of Madonna widely popular in the Roman world. Her frontally posed lovely gentle face framed in wavy hair gazes at the worshipper drawn to the newborn on her lap promising rebirth. The robust child seated between her feet is Plutus, the Lord of wealth conceived by Demeter and Liasion in a thrice plowed field. In a twinkle, the goddess suggestively points to her child to establish herself Demeter acting as an intermediary to the underworld. To the right, the Gemini twins called Dioscuri by the Greek wear off-shoulder tunic and wrestle below Isis' newborn sun god Horus-Harpocrates. The anthropomorphized Greco-Egyptian child-god Harpocrates is recognized by his side-lock; as the holder of the secrets of the grave, he ushers silence by placing his right forefinger on his lips. On left, curly-haired Aion seated on the foreground is judiciously larger; he cradles a circular dish holding the planets shaped like beads to signify eternity. By his side stand two other personifications, one of whom perched high might be Asiatic

Eros holding a sacred parrot noted for prophecy and posturing of love. Standing next to Eros is youthful Dionysus, the god of wine and religious ecstasy, identified by pine cone on his forehead and a drinking bowl in the crook of his left arm. The goddess seated on a low stool with turned legs rests her feet on a block with the carving of a broadleaf inside a compressed dentil-and-drop border. The group of global offspring on either side appears on a pedestal with roughly carved lotus petals signifying resurrection. Pointedly, each one of the child gods that make allegoric curtain call on the platform of the goddess is represented in diverse compositions in several early Buddhist sculpture. While personification and allegoric orchestration through symbols is a Greco-Roman device influenced by Egypt, the multi-figure group of sculpture was a Hellenistic innovation.



o.2 Boy feeding parrot uttering human speech (Yajurveda), Terracotta, Bengal, 2nd century CE
Los Angeles: LACMA (M.85.35.1)

o.3 Rajatarangini, 2.46 x 23.5 x 11.7 cm, Terracotta, Chandraketurah, Bengal, 2nd century CE
New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art (2002.253) Purchase Friends of Asian Art Gifts

o.4 Offering plate, Schist, Ø 14.7 cm, Gandhara, 1st-2nd century CE
Z. P. Butt Collection, London

On an aside, “the human tongued Indian bird” is the take on the parrot by Aristotle, the tutor to Alexander. Pliny the Elder (20-79 CE) in *Natural History* (77 CE) notes the export of parrots from India. Another Roman author, Claudius Aelianus (175-235 CE) *On the Characteristics of Animals* (200 CE) mentions religious veneration of the parrot. It is interesting to note that the future Kamadeva equivalent to Eros let fly his arrows seated on a parrot. Resembling Harpocratic-Eros representing the child god Horus in Alexandrian manufacture, a squatting boy feeds a parrot in a Kushan votive terracotta (o.2). The boy similar to the celebrated “Temple Boys” of Cyprus wears apotropaic bulla strung with Triratna amulets signifying the goddess.¹ The Phoenicians settled in North Africa traded extensively in Cyprus and Rhodes and their craftsmanship in versatile clay is apparent in the early terracotta votives of Bengal. A portentous Kushan plaque depicts

¹ Theodora Hadzisteliou-Price, The Type of the Crouching Child and the 'Temple Boys' (*The Annual of the British School at Athens*, Vol. 64 (1969), pp. 95-111.

goddess Rajatarangini linked to the parrot, she hugs the dazzling infant sun god on her hip. Mother and child are embellished with meticulously detailed ornaments. The goddess draped in sheer silk ruminates on seduction, idolatry, fetishism and theatrical cult rituals performed by live courtesan dancers (0.3).

Likewise, the Yusufzai goddess of Life and Wisdom presiding over a fabulous gathering of youthful liberators in Gandhara is covered with well-thought-out symbols that beg to differ from the flawed concept of Hariti. The shift due to sheer indolence is apparently injected by the role of Buddha rectifying a dire state in ambiguous folklore in which a fearsome Yakshi named Hariti sheared children, caused smallpox and stole human body and soul, then from being a ravenous ogress miraculously became the benevolent child giver and protector. It appears that the enviable folk narrative about Buddha and has misguided and masked for decades the true identity of a syncretic goddess whose vital role in the funerary cult is untainted rejuvenation and rebirth. The Yusufzai icon of the goddess now in the British Museum clearly incarnates the “Best Truth” known as Asha the Life-Giver. In this case, the sculptor could not have seen without inventing what he saw. The icon combining various concepts and cultures also demonstrates how a single image typecast as “Hariti” amalgamates the qualities of Isis, Venus Celeste, Tellus, Ceres, Demeter, Ardoksho and Lakshmi to appeal to people of diverse race simultaneously by its effortless vitality and beauty.

A goddess named Jara associated with Hariti is a Protean Bahurupi capable of taking various forms. Jara restored Jarasandha, the son of the Magadhan king Brihadratha. Because his two wives ate a malicious magic mango Jarasandha was born with his body divided vertically into two halves, which was united with life by Jara. Therefore, instead of Hariti with a gruesome past why not acknowledge Jara as the legendary life-giver and postmortem healer? In these churning times, while harnessing the mysterious working of the female forces in nature, Hariti seems to have resolutely stolen power from various goddesses represented in Greco-Roman style. By whatever name it is known, a rose is after all is a rose. In general, the iconography of Hariti holding cornucopia alone dissolves the differences at a time when even the queens of Egypt and Rome adopted the attributes of Isis-Venus, Demeter-Ceres and various other goddesses including the Tyche governing the fortunes of the city-states. In one of the offering plates from Gandhara Hariti holds the leafy branch observed on the footstool of the Yusufzai mother goddess. Here, the goddess on lotus wears tunic and scarf over baggy trousers and squats with splayed leg typical of a matron in a Turkmen tribe (0.4).

To arrive at the Best Truth, it is important to maintain the differences and acknowledge the transcultural identities of the Kushan deities. It is extremely significant that visibly, Hariti is absent in the Kushan bilingual dedicatory coins. Kushan coins label the goddess of fortune holding cornucopia as Ardoksho in Tocharian Greek (Αρδοξπο/APDOXPO/ Ashaeixsho). Actually, Ardoksho manifests religious faith flooding the Greco-Parthian Punic-Carthaginian Turkmen-Scythian Kushan league. Ardoksho is known as Asha, Asha Vahishta or the Best Truth, and Ashi Vanghuhi, the Good Ashi, which accentuates the nuanced classification of admirable ideals in Zoroastrianism.

Mahayana Buddhism likewise thrives in word games. Similar to Isis, Salabhanjika the tree goddess contributing to enlightenment and the attainment of knowledge imparts brilliant radiance and eternal life anagrammed as Amitabha Buddha. The Mahayana biopic of the recharged Buddha is a poetic fable resembling the Cycle of Life. Like the vignettes in the Egyptian Book of the Dead, performing transcripts of the Buddhist texts in countless pictures ceaselessly repeated on the funerary monuments enable the soul of the deceased to navigate the afterlife and reach eternal bliss in the realm of immortals. A body of Buddhist texts is similar to the ancient Egyptian “Spells for Going Forth by Day,” and it is so over the moon that it is super covert. In the collection of spells, the showstopper is the birth of Buddha is a Manomaya phenomenon of Iddhi or concentrated meditation. It is like one of the childhood marvels when paper bursts into flame under the intense focus of the sun’s energy through a magnifying glass. Some of the mysteries claimed by Tantric Tibetan meditation, such as the manifestation of the phantom image of Buddha or acquiring a Rainbow Body to ascend to heaven are well documented in early Buddhist art and literature. Birth of Buddha reliefs from Gandhara depicts three or four goddesses holding attributes, and the clearly astounded male adepts assisting the incredulous childbirth (o.6). In the manner of the Book of the Dead, textual sources affirm that immediately after the newborn dived out of Maya’s right midriff, he proclaimed “Heaven above and earth below, I am honored,” and cushioned by the lotus of rebirth took seven steps in the four directions of the universe. Couched in metaphor, the seven rays shining at dawn on a brand-new world originate within the “Solar Logos,” which is the consciousness of the “Divine Being” personifying the Sun. The amazing scene depicting the infant at birth, the immortal child standing at the front, and portrayed again as the immortal adult on the extreme left conveys the sequence of an ongoing event, which is a Greek method of telling a story adopted by Romans as a continuous narrative device.



o.8 Tree goddess, Schist, Yusufzai, Pakistan, 1st-2nd century CE

Berlin: Museum of Asian Art

o.5 Birth of Buddha, Schist, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan, 2nd century CE

Peshawar: Peshawar Museum

o.6 Tree goddess, Schist, Yusufzai, Pakistan, 1st-2nd century CE

o.7 Tree goddess, Sandstone, Mathura, India, 1st-2nd century CE

Immediately after the newborn soul took the seven steps, celestial nymphs sprinkled flowers from the sky while nine dragons showered him with water. The luminous event took place under the Sala tree seized by Maya, which in her stance and intent labels Maya as Salabhanjika, the tree goddess identified with Isis, the goddess of rebirth, wisdom, and afterlife. In a prayerful funerary relief from Gandhara, the tree goddess framed in the bead-and-reel border holds a tree branch to establish her identity as Mahamaya Devi. Instead of the infant leaping out of her midriff she strikes the hand-on-hip goddess pose and stands on a vessel brimming with the Elixir of Life. The curiously shaped composition depicts a male figure straining to support the vessel on a pyramidal pedestal (0.7). On a fragment in Mathura style Salabhanjika wearing crown repeats the format down to her ornament that combines a neckband and a long chain looped between her breasts similar to the Yusufzai Madonna (0.8). A tree goddess carved in Greco-Roman style once adorned a stupa in Yusufzai meaning the "the (Pashtun) descendants of Yusuf," which is an autonomous enclave of combatant tribes in Pakistan spilling into Afghanistan (0.5). The bead-and-reel motif on the molded border is a repeat on the gold stater of Eucratides I, which helps to place the votives in the first half of the first century CE. The Hellenistic bead-and-reel pattern introduced in Persia and Egypt is first encountered on the abacus of the naturalistic humped bull capital from Rampurva in Bihar, which is superb Greco-Roman statuary housed in New Delhi Rashtrapati Bhavan. The capital of the early historic Allahabad pillar altar of the same period repeats the bead-and-reel along with the Greek Anthemion motif comprising rosette and acanthus radiating like palm leaf on a 4th century BCE monument in the Polyandron cemetery in Athens (0.9 a, b). It is significant that the bead-and-reel understood to be a decorative device that occurs in the context of symbols that signify revival or resurgence of life. John Boardman observes that the bead-and-reel unique to Greece was developed from the turning techniques used to shape wood and stone.²



0.9a The Anthemion motif, Athens: Polyandron cemetery, 4th century BCE

0.9b Bead-and-reel and Anthemion motif, Abacus of Allahabad capital, 1st century CE

² John Boardman, *Reflections on the Origins of Indian Stone Architecture* (Bulletin of the Asia Institute, New Series, Vol. 12, 1998) p.16 (pp. 13-22) *Alexander's Legacy in the East Studies in Honor of Paul Bernard*.

Maia, the Roman goddess of magic and childbirth, celebrated now as Maya Devi stands in an identical stance to give magical rebirth to the immortal soul that she conceived in a supernatural way. In the cycle of life, Buddha's Great Departure culminates in Death. Despite his valiant fight with Mara and his army, he lay down to die on his side between the Sala trees under which he was born. At his death, the Sala trees signifying Eternal Abode (Salle - Chamber) burst into out of season flowers. Curiously, Buddha's Birth and Death took place on the same day, when he reached the infinite space above the realm of 33 gods located at the highest thirty-first level that rises from Mount Meru at the center of the world. In comparison, the aspirant to the blissful afterlife has to face 42 judges assisting the Egyptian goddess Maat personifying truth, justice, righteousness and order of the cosmos. The perfect number 6 as the sum 33 or 42 relates to harmony and balance. The Destiny Number 6 in terms of Astrology and the Zodiac is associated with Virgo offering a water pot and the planet Venus personified by the goddess of love and fortune. Numerological reflections and the esoteric sayings demonstrate the extent of late Hellenistic syncretism: "Heaven above, Earth below" circuiting the aphorism "As above, so below" associated with Alexandrian Hermeticism and sacred geometry.

Hariti devouring infants before being transformed into a loving mother goddess is similar to the legend of the Punic mother goddess Tanit in charge of the cemeteries called Tophet in Carthage. Tanit who gobbled up infants allegedly sacrificed to her gained universal worship as Venus Celest in the Mediterranean region. The Punic goddess worshiped in the western Mediterranean as Dea Caelestis was absorbed by the Greeks into Indo-Greek goddesses. Above all, Demeter, the consort of Saturn, mothered Persephone, the Queen of the Underworld, who together preside over the sacred law, and the cycle of life and death. Hariti with attributes of Demeter dominates the remarkably regimented necropolises in Gandhara. The goddess cradling a cornucopia is enthroned with a Roman prince holding a cup of wine in a group sculpture from Takht-i-Bahai meaning the 'Good Hub' in Pakistan. Similar to Italic Fortuna, Tellus or Tyche the iconography of Demeter is the precursor of various Buddhist goddesses holding cornucopia. In addition to a diadem, Demeter-Hariti wears a cylindrical polos crown of Greek goddesses. Her erotically voluptuous body and her hand suggestively hovering above the lap of her consort conveys endless conjugal delight in Arcadia (0.6). The syncretic *interpretatio graeca* in the centralized Greek composition employs a Roman type of personification in which the child at the knee of the goddess is more specifically a symbol of fertility. The prince personified as Dionysus drinks from the cup of the divine female; the wine cup was part of religious ritual in which initiates entered Babylonian and Mithraic Mysteries. Dionysus in Elysian Mystery was the last god to be accepted into Olympus and the first to appear with Demeter in Greco-Buddhist reliquary cult. Focus upon the couple moves to mature Plutus holding a money purse at the center. It then circles down to the luxurious foot cushion where slavish opulence crouches in the manner of Eutychides' personification of affluent River Orontes. At. Apart from a passion for antiquities, it is evident that secret doctrines are best conveyed by innovative design. The jeweler-sculptor takes pride to counterfeit the original ornaments and clothing. The goddess wears huge drop earrings and bangles. Draped in a cloak and short tunic the

prince wears a light, low-heeled slipper shoe called *soccus* in Latin (Gk. *Sykchos*). The Persian or Turkmen footwear ideal for repose is designed to create the look of bare feet is like the mitten, with one compartment for the big toe and one for the rest. Associated with formal dress, knee-high socks are worn with shoes, usually as part of a Roman uniform.



o.10 Tyche and Roman prince, Schist, 27 x 24.7 x 10.3 cm, Takht-i-Bahai, 2nd century CE
London: British Museum (OA 1950-7.26.2)

o.11 Apotheosis of Ardoksho and Buddha in aedicule, Schist, Gandhara, 2nd century CE
(e-Auction)

In the all-male reliquary cult, Gandharan votive icons invoking Ardoksho known as Hariti depicts the enthroned goddess holding cornucopia. On an equal basis, the goddess is shown seated with a departed doyen from the Roman East. The divine couple is typically identified as Hariti and Panchika; in Sanskrit, Panchika is “the goddess permeating the Five Elements in the Creation.” Often, the celestial couple is accompanied by children to signify conjugal bliss in the afterlife. The winsome goddess also named Abhirati indicates delight and devotion. Lokadhatu is located in the east, where dwells the Sun and Buddha Akṣobhya. The Bodhisattva progressing towards the attainment of Buddhahood and the goddess modeled after the courtesan-priestesses are ornamented with symbolic jewelry. Contemplation of the radiant Buddha image manifests the goddess, the vital force critical for his survival beyond the grave. The Greek letter Φ (Phi) is the code for the divine union from which immense light emanates. The goddess reigns supreme on the reliquary stupa; it is built on a radiate wheel called Kalachakra mandala. The stupa plan is a graphic circle with a dot at the center signifying incorruptible House of Gold ☉ in which the reborn attain immense radiance (o). The relics of the departed

ritually deposited in the womb of the goddess called Garbhadhatu is where the soul mingles with the goddess. South Asia discovered as the new Arcadia corresponds to the idea of the Mathura Brindavan now famous for the Krishna cult. In the beginning, Mathura in North India was at the core of Buddhist cult, together with Gandhara it drove the well-oiled wheel of Mahayana Buddhism. The bilingual Kandahar Rock Edict Nb13 inscribed in Greek and Aramaic interprets 'Bhagavata budhe' as a revered divine being. Supernatural sexual rituals interpreted as cosmological union with the divine female leads to illumination achieved through contemplation of stupa and signs of goddess integrated into stupa sculpture. Signs signifying the goddess crafted with ingenuity are either overlooked or misconstrued by two millennia of disconnect.



o.12 Liberated tutor Haritiputra in Himalaya region: Steatite relic casket, , Sanchi, 1st century CE
London: Victoria & Albert Museum (IM.218-1921)

o.13 Gold plate, L.7 cm, 14 lines engraved in Kharosthi, Gandhara, mid-1st century CE
London: Private Collection

In the Rabatak Inscription Kanishka proclaims in year 1 that goddess Nana / Nanya, the Grand Mother and the giver of victory is responsible for investiture. The goddess was the most powerful among the retinue of four Devarajas in the four directions of heaven.³ In Pure Land Buddhism 33 gods, goddesses, and apsaras reside in the blissful Tusita Heaven governed by Lord Indra with the coregent Brahma. Literally, the goddess is the Torana gateway to Heaven. Ardoksho personifying fortune and wealth match Gajalakshmi and Srma Devata first installed on the Buddhist monuments. Subsequently sustained by the Guptas, goddess Lakshmi continues to receive fervent worship. In contrast, an inscribed Buddhist reliquary unmistakably seeks the protection of Hariti as the leading power among fearsome goblins and legion of a legless creature in the graveyards mistaken to be monasteries now. A relic casket from Sanchi stupa inscribed in Prakrit Brahmi in an extreme attempt to seek protection from Hariti is dedicated to "Haritiputra".⁴ The lathe-turned globular relic casket in mottled steatite with flattened chattra-like disc cover contained four small pieces of calcined bone. A few concentric rings. On the outsides of the body and the cover, and the inside of the cover, are the three following Pali inscriptions, written in the early Brahmi characters.

³ Si-yu-ki-Buddhist Records of the Western World by Hiuen Tsang, (tr.) Samuel Beal, Delhi Edition, New Delhi: Orient Publishing Company, 1983) pp.110-111.

⁴ Inside the cover, 'Sapurisa(sa) Majhimasa', i.e. [the relics] of the Emancipate Kasapagota (kasayapagotra) the Teacher of the whole Hemawanta (Himalaya region). Outside the body, 'Sapurisasa Haritiputasa,' i.e., [the relics] of the Emancipated Haritiputa (Haritiputra).

A gold plate inscribed in Gandhari similar to Aramaic is from a stupa-shaped gilded relic casket in schist (78 x 32 cm). The text refers to king Senavarma, ruler of Odi, contemporary to “the son of Kuyula Kataphsa” – a likely reference to Kujala Kadphises or the Kushan king Vima Kadphises. Line 13 refers to sarira or body relic painted and brought to life by Samghamitra, son of Ali’a...”⁵ In quest of protections from Hell (Niraya) Line 10 running into 11 invokes all the deliverers from the perdition (apaya). Thus, Indra Deva, the gods and the four great kings in heaven, the twenty-eight Yaksha captains, and Hariti with her retinue are summoned for help, since the utter fright between zenith and the nadir are beings born either footless or two-footed or many-footed, having form, formless, intelligent, unintelligent. May it (prayer) be for the good and pleasure for all beings.⁶ On the whole, the inscribed gold plate records the funerary preparations made for a greatly respected caravan leader. Filled with adjectives and epithets, the gold scroll reads as follows:⁷

(1) Revering with head the feet of its stupa-pala (protector of the monument) very dear to the assembled community (samgha) of both monks and nuns, having a mass of (monastic) nobility, (ascetic) devotion, and (holy) chastity, Senavarma, Isvara (lord), king of Odi, navhapati (lord of the people), reports. Now in the Eka-kuta (‘one peaked) stupa monument, of this donor by whom treasure was deposited, by name Kadama, (including others) down to the mestata (magnate) Varmasena, the dharma-gift was munificent. Then the Eka-kuta was conceived.

(2) Next, my honoured father with my grandfather planned the stupa with great zeal. The thought was effected by Senavarma. Then also the Eka-kuta was built with great height and circumference. I built with vigour. Here the Eka-kuta Vijuvapata (Vidyut-pata ‘a fall of lightning’), in the interior of the stupa, erected there was placed as deposit.

(3) And inscribed the basic casket covered over with a cloth (patta) adorned with keme- and- seme- decoration. Vasusena, son of Uttarasena, king of Odi, from the Ismaho family, deposited in this Eka-kuta at that time the Bhagavant’s body relics brought from the basic Hall (sala) Ra’ana, Senavarma, son of Ayidasena, also born of the Ismaho royal family, king of Odi, assembled the whole equipment for the whole shrine (caitya). He made a great vow (vrata) for the prosperity of others and

(4) For the desires of others. **I am depositing these physical relics (dhatu) of the lord (bhagavant), the great caravan leader for the wonderful group of fine men and women**, by elements of being (dharma) everywhere having attained supreme control, with foulness blown away, perpetual gatherer of good roots gained in many 100,000 ages (kalpa), ascetic in all ways, his passion, hatred, delusion destroyed,

⁵ Translated by Professor H. W. Bailey (see Bailey 1980, pp.21-29).)

⁶ Stanislav J. Czuma., Kushan Sculptures: Images from Early India (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985) pp.168-69 (82 F). In cooperation with Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio (exh. catalog)

⁷ H. W. Bailey, A Kharoṣṭrī Inscription of Senavarma, King of Oḍi, *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 21-29.

(5) Freed from the entangled knots of by the means of self-study, profit, and hard-minded pollution, full of the attainment of trance (samadhi-) of escape (vimoksa-) by power of meditation (dhyana-) through all good elements (dharma-), by superior powers (abjijna-), the relics of him who then from such a body (atmabhava-), having diamond structure, on separation from the last body lay down with the final body, being both awakened fully

(6) To uttermost knowledge (bodhi-) and exalted. These elements (dharma-) are thus ended in the trouble of the present world, harmonious, quite perfect, without defect. These elements (dharma-) also are wholly contemplated, created by all factors (samskara-), separated from all birth, age, death, fear, danger, having made final the destruction of the course of life (gati-), of him, for whom birth, age, and death had ended. Of him they now persist.

(7) Of him fully quenched (parinirvana-), this relic (dhatu-), gained by moral conduct (sila-), gained by gift of attainment of release of wisdom of trance (samadhi-), with this (ime(na-))body relic (sarira-) possessing the material basis (dhatu-) of nirvana according to the Thathagata's instruction, thus (ta(tha)) I deposit.

(8) Honoured are the truly worthy ones, gatherer of the lord's (bhagavant), adherent's (arhant) and fully enlightened one's relics (dhatu-), who possess the dasabala's force over passion, hate, delusion, and have attained the four intrepidities. Honoured are the pratyeka-sambhuddhas (those individually enlightened ones) the arhants, the disciples (sravaka-), anagamin-monks, sakrdagamin-monks, attained to the stages (of the Buddhist career), and all nobles (arya-) individuals. Honoured are mother and father performing austerities, also the teacher now living in Jivaputra, and father deceased Ayidasena, king of Odi. Honoured is the King, King of Kings, Kuyula Katphisa's son Sadaskano **the devaputra (son of god)**

(9) With the anankaio (royal kinsman) suhasoma the protector (asma.a-kara-), with the gusuraka-nobles, and the sturaka-nobles possessing authority and the troops. Honoured are my brother deceased Varmasena, king of Odi, and the kumara-princes Ajidavarma and Aryasena. Honoured are all born of the Ismaho royal family from Bhadasena the king to the great-grandfather Medisasena, king of Odi.

(10) Honoured with whole retinue are Brahma Sahampati, Sakra the indra-king of the deva-gods (devanam indrab), the four Great Kings, the twenty-eight goblins (yaksa-) captains, **Hariti with her retinue, in short all deliverers from the perdition (apaya-) of the great niraya-hell**, and tomorrow from the zenith and the nadir as many beings born either footless or two-footed or many-footed,

(11) Having form, formless, intelligent, unintelligent. May it be for the good and pleasure for all beings. May there be offering, gift, dharma-donation, invocation, faith, and what is favour. May he be who is Maitreya (?) who is with this Sakyamuni, the arhant, the wholly enlightened one the ascetic, enlightened, the destroyer of intoxications, the conqueror of thirst, remover of desires, ending craving, wholly

(12) Without passion, without preferences, sated, excellent, of the finest taste, immobile, without illness, greatly desired, most brahma-holy, then completely perfected. There he revolves in the immortal region (dhatu-) there where is exhausted the exhaustion of the beginning less and endless transmigration (samasara-), where all these sensations weaken for him by whom this Eka-kuta stupa has been built and also for him

(13) Who cares for it after building, there, here, above, either deva-god or man goblin (yaksa-) or dragon or suparni-bird or celestial one (gandharva-) or demon (kumbhanda), those also in the naraya-hell, footless and incarnate, for him who having mediated on praise (varna-) enjoys the action of merits of his faculties among the deceased. And the body-relics(sarira-) to be deposited were painted to the life by Samghamitra son of Ali's the anakaios (royal kinsman), and were ordered by Sadi'a

(14) Son of Sacaka the meridarkhes (district officer) and were brought by Bavesara son of Pre'a, the guard (tirata-). In the fourteenth year 14 – of the isvara (lord) Senavarma's year, with his mind concentrated upon the future. Of the month of Sravana (July to August), the eighth day. Then also the gold was carried by Vali'a son of Makadaka the treasurer.



Tree of Life, Middle architrave of north gateway, Sandstone Torana, Sanchi Stupa, 1st century CE
Isis Pharia spreads veil billowing like sail to speed charioteer on Roman quadriga, Sanchi Stupa I

Events and ideas recorded either through words or through images allow us to access the past. The gold leaf inscribed in Kharoshti demonstrates that Buddha is but a cog in the wheel; everything in the mortuary cult revolves around faith in afterlife and the reliance on signs and symbols, deities and personifications, the natural objects, architectural elements, and their linguistic forms related to conceptual structures and communicative functions. On the middle architrave of the northern gateway of Sanchi Stupa I, a tray of food and spouting water from a situla identifies half-naked Isis-Venus at the Torana to a tomb where the goddess couples with her fluid natural role as the Tree of Life, mother and real-time consort of the deceased. The pictorial narrative of heavenly bliss on the right half contrasts with the turmoil besetting the army of Mara on left. In the case of ritual driven society the narrative sculptures on early Buddhist monuments, some illustrating fables, provide the vantage position to view the harmony between nature, society and faith in ritual healing. In particular, the personifications designed for spiritual growth provide the interpretive frameworks to reveal the secrets of a vanished Mystery religious. As regards the invisible, what is lost is glimpsed through the mirror of enduring deities, ritual objects, and the actions performed in the traditional astrological religion.